The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade-union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1683 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 13, 1943 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 33, NO. 28

AN EDITORIAL

The Great "Spud" Mystery

Not so long ago there disappeared from the tables of the American people a lowly vegetable upon which through the years they had come to rely as a staple food. The circumstances of this disappearance were somewhat mystifying. Such a thing had never happened before. We were told a terrible shortage of potatoes had developed. Some blamed cold weather for delaying the early crop. Others insisted that the vanishing spuds had been abducted by speculators anxious to drive the market price up.

Whatever the facts were, there is no doubt that the price of potatoes did go up. There is no doubt that spuds were bootlegged. The corner grocerymen dished them up from behind the counter with a great deal of "hush-hush" and at a fantastic cost. The lowly spud became a rarity and a treat.

Now, suddenly, we are informed that a tremendous surplus of potatoes has developed. The War Food Administration sends us an "urgent appeal" to eat potatoes now. We are told of a bumper crop of early potatoes which are perishable. "These early potatoes," says the release, "won't keep—they must be consumed or wasted—it's now or never."

One would expect that such an overwhelming surplus of spuds would drive down the price and make potatoes an attractive buy for housekeepers who have to spread their pennies thin these days. Perish the thought! In the same dispatch from New York which tells of a 15-million bushel potato crop on Long Island, there appears a sentence to the effect that the War Food Administration is buying heavily "to keep up the price."

In the name of all that's reasonable—WHY? If there is an actual surplus of potatoes now—which we don't doubt—why should we have to pay an inflated price of 5 cents a pound for them in the retail stores.

It's things like this that disgust the American people and make them wonder whether the people who are running our domestic economy on the home front know what it's all about.

Roosevelt Lauds Women Workers; "Doing A Grand Job," He Says

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt praised women war workers for "a grand job."

Mr. Roosevelt's tribute was in a letter to Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins on the 25th birthday of the Women's Bureau of the Labor Department. Miss Perkins read it on the National Radio Forum.

The President said 16,000,000 women are employed, 5,000,000 of them in munitions industries. More and more will go to work in war plants soon, he added.

"They are doing a grand job, all of them," he wrote. "Working under what are new conditions for most of them, they are showing the skill and efficiency which make for high production.

"We owe them and their fathers, who are taking the places of men in many drudging civilian jobs, a great debt, and I join with Americans here and those on fighting fronts all over the world in acknowledging it upon an occasion such as the anniversary of the government agency which is so much concerned with their welfare."

Shipyard Workers Build More Ships In Six Months Than In All of 1942

Washington, D. C. — American workers in shipyards throughout the country built and delivered more ships in the first six months of 1943 than were constructed in all of 1942, the Maritime Commission announced.

With the delivery of 168 cargo vessels totaling 1,676,500 deadweight tons in June, production of ships for the first half of 1943 totaled 879 ships totaling 8,818,022 deadweight tons. In the entire year 1942 the yards produced 746 vessels totaling 8,088,732 deadweight tons.

June construction brought other new all-time records to the record-breaking feats of the nation's shipbuilding industry.

A new record for ships delivered by an individual yard was set by AFL workers, when the California Shipbuilding Corp. sent 20 Liberty ships into service compared with 18 delivered in May and 19 in April.

AFL workers in the former Richmond Yards No. 1 and 2, now merged into one yard operated by the Shipbuilding Division of the Permanente Metals Corp. of California, turned in a total of 25 Liberties.

Other high totals turned in included 17 Liberties by AFL workers at the Oregon Shipbuilding Corp., Portland, Ore.

The total of 168 vessels delivered in June included 115 Liberty Ships, 19 C-type cargo ships, 9 coastal cargo vessels, 11 tankers, 6 coastal tankers, 3 special types, 6 sea-going tugs, and 2 ore carriers.

The West Coast region produced 82 ships totaling 873,800 deadweight tons, or 51.94 per cent of the national total. The East Coast built 30.39 per cent of the tonnage, or 509,400 deadweight tons represented by 45 vessels. On the Gulf Coast 25 ships with combined deadweight tonnage of 257,800 were delivered, accounting for 14.18 per cent of the grand total. The remaining 3.49 per cent of the tonnage was delivered from Great Lakes region yards which built 16 ships.

Green Urges Workers To Defeat Anti-Labor Congressmen In 1944

Tobin Sets Date For Conference Of AFL Committee With John L. Lewis

Washington, D. C.—Vice President Daniel J. Tobin announced he had called a meeting in the nation's capital of the special committee of the AFL Executive Council appointed to consider the application of John L. Lewis for re-affiliation of the United Mine Workers Union.

Mr. Tobin, who is chairman of the special committee, said he had sent an invitation to Mr. Lewis to attend. Other members of the AFL Committee are Vice Presidents Matthew Woll and George M. Harrison.

The committee, it is expected, will take up with Mr. Lewis conflicts of jurisdiction which exist between the United Mine Workers Union and other unions already within the AFL fold.

After its discussion with Lewis, the committee plans to make a report to the mid-summer meeting of the Executive Council which is scheduled to open in Chicago on Aug. 9.

Procedure For Settling Grievances Within Plants Stressed By WLB

Washington, D. C. — The importance to the war effort of promptly settling grievances within plants and without reference to the National War Labor Board, was unanimously emphasized by the WLB.

The board strongly urged that adequate grievance procedure be included in all union contract agreements. The procedure should provide for final "settlement of grievances by an arbitrator, impartial chairman, umpire, and other terms and conditions agreed to by the parties."

The basis for the national war labor policy in American today is that the voluntary agreement between the responsible leaders of labor and industry that there be no strikes or lockouts for the duration of the war," the board recognized. "Proper grievance procedures" can protect this no-strike agreement as well as aid morale and production and preserve collective bargaining as a basic democratic institution in the total war effort.

To achieve these ends, exact steps and procedures for handling grievances must be worked out by the parties, and should terminate in a provision for "final and binding settlement if all grievances not otherwise resolved."

American Labor Delegation Plans Two Months Visit To South America

Washington, D. C.—An American labor delegation, including two leading representatives of the American Federation of Labor, plans to leave July 26 for a two-months visit to the various South American republics.

President William Green announced that the American Federation of Labor will be represented by Edward J. Brown, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and George Mantanyia, president of the United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters of the United States and Canada.

Among the American republics the delegation is scheduled to visit are Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba, and perhaps others, depending on travel facilities available.

This trip represents an endeavor to develop closer understanding among the peoples of the Western Hemisphere and to lay the groundwork for a greater degree of mutual confidence, both during the war and post-war period.

Intensification of the war effort requires fuller comprehension by labor throughout the workplaces of the stake that it has in the victory of democracy ever dictatorship. It is believed that responsible representatives of U. S. labor can carry the point of view of the people of the United States to the people of the other American republics with special effectiveness.

As a result of this visit, the American Federation of Labor hopes to obtain first-hand information of inter-American affairs.

William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, received the invitation for the visit from Bernardo Ibanez, secretary-general of the Chilean Confederation of Workers, last April after his tour in this country.

No-Strike Pledge Is Reaffirmed By Labor Unions In New Jersey

Trenton, N. J.—Labor and management pledged to Governor Charles Edison that they would use their full efforts to achieve "100 per cent war effort" by the elimination of strikes, lockouts or any other work stoppages in New Jersey's arsenal of democracy for the duration of the war. They also agreed that the duly constituted agencies of the government would be used in an effort to settle all grievances and differences that might arise.

Called by Governor Edison, the conference, which included representatives of the AFL State Federation of Labor, the State CIO Council, the New Jersey Manufacturers Association and the State Chamber of Commerce, was told by a War Labor Board representative that more speed would be made in adjudication in the disposal of applications for wage adjustments presented to the board.

Theodore Kheel, WLB regional chairman, conceded that complaints had been subject to delays in adjudication of requests for wage adjustments had been justified.

Governor Edison said no-strike pledge forms would be distributed to leaders of management and labor in individual plants throughout the State for signature. "This promise is, in effect, a pledge of loyalty to our flag," the governor stated. "I believe that all persons will be happy to give it."

14,549 Labor Disputes Settled By U. S. Conciliation Service

Buffalo, N. Y.—Dr. John R. Steelman, director of the United States Conciliation Service, said that 14,549 labor disputes had been settled by the service's 275 commissioners in the months following Pearl Harbor, an average of 58 a day.

He added that since Pearl Harbor the number of every 100 disputes brought to the attention of the service "is getting to a work stoppage, had been settled without the loss of production.

"The spirit of cooperation and unity in industrial America accounts in large measure for the tremendous advance in production," Dr. Steelman asserted. "We have all worked together; we have sacrificed together; we have resolved differences around the council table and the nation boasts in behalf of an all-out effort. And we have not held back or delayed in constructive action."

The Conciliation Service, he said, had been operating in peace as well as in war "without compulsion or force, without orders or recommendations."

"Our settlements have come, as we have described the parties to find a common ground of mutual interest and respect; and when a more friendly atmosphere has been built we have attempted to help the parties find their own solution to their problems," Dr. Steelman declared.

He said that he believed in "the power of effective conciliation to heal the wounds of conflict," and added:

"I know that peace in industry is more necessary now than at any other time in our history. When our workers have a dispute, they can sit down and settle it by conciliation, while they continue to work with the energy and will of free men. It is because of this device will that American workers have achieved our present record of production."

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Shuns Political Alliance With CIO Until Organic Unity Can Be Attained

New York City. — President William Green called upon the six million members of the American Federation of Labor to defeat for re-election every member of Congress who voted for the anti-labor Connally-Smith Act.

Addressing the delegates at the convention of the International Longshoremen's Association, Mr. Green declared:

"Get ready for the fight in 1944. Go back home and organize. Let them know that they are going to be defeated if they trample upon the rights of the working men of our country.

"Six million members of our American Federation of Labor have been penalized and insulted by the action of Congress in enacting the Connally-Smith Bill over the President's veto."

Mr. Green charged that Congress "wrote a page of shame for the party in control of the Government" by passage of the bill.

However, Mr. Green refused to be lured into acceptance of the CIO proposal for joint political action against labor's enemies. He emphasized that united action with the CIO must be predicated upon organic unity with the CIO.

"We have been negotiating with the CIO," Mr. Green told the delegates in an extemporaneous address. "We feel that labor's interests can best be promoted through organic unity. If we are to unite on the economic and political fields, we must first establish organic unity. This is the note we are sounding in our negotiations with the CIO.

"I cannot say what will happen, but we shall continue to invite all those who left us to come back home to the American Federation of Labor. We will gladly accept them, but make no mistake about it, the AFL is never going over to anybody."

ANTONINI SCORES OWI RADIO CENSOR

New York City. — Charging that censorship exercised by the New York branch of the Office of War Information was unwarranted, Luigi Antonini, spokesman for the Italian-American Labor Council, refused to continue his broadcasts to Italy.

"I think I have some knowledge of what is the Italian psychology and what is the line to approach the minds of the Italian people," Mr. Antonini said in a letter to Elmer Davis, Director of the Office of War Information, setting forth the reasons for his action.

He claimed that much of the information contained in his broadcasts was received from responsible underground sources in Italy and that the censorship had reached the point where he found it impossible to accept responsibility for them.

The incident that resulted in Mr. Antonini's protest was the ruling of the censor in banning a portion of his broadcast urging workers in Italy to struggle against the Fascist dictatorship.

BRAUKMILLER FAMILY CLAIMS RECORD FOR BUILDING SHIPS

The Navy has asked for ships, ships and more ships, and the John H. Braukmiller family of Portland, Ore., is doing its part to see that those ships are built, according to the Shipbuilder, weekly publication of Local 72, Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Welders and Helpers of America (AFL).

Eight members of the immediate Braukmiller family, work on the graveyard shift at the Swan Island Shipyards and they lay claim to the title of the "shipbuildingest" family in America. Included are John Braukmiller, his eight sons, one daughter, and four daughters-in-law.

All of the men are shipfitters while the women are welders.

SANTA FE RAIL POLICE CHOOSE AFL AFFILIATE

Washington, D. C.—An election held under the direction of the National Mediation Board to choose a collective bargaining representative in the entire railway policeman of the Santa Fe Railroad resulted in a 99 per cent majority for the National Council Railway Patrolmen's Unions, AFL affiliate.

The AFL Plan To Banish Fear of Want

Sixth Article Holds Increased Social Security Necessary to Protect Workers and Limit Inflationary Prices

"I oppose the use of payroll taxes as a measure of war finance unless the worker is given his full money's worth in increased social security." President Roosevelt.

While we are fighting for world security we must lay plans to put freedom from want and freedom from fear into practical operation immediately after the war. Now is the best time to build security and to free ourselves from the fear of insecurity by insuring against unemployment, disability and old age; now when most of us have steady employment at good wages. After the war some of us may be without work for some time while industry is converting to peace-time production. Then we shall need the benefits we can start paying for now.

Insurance for the Essentials

To get ready to meet the conditions which we shall be facing right after the war, we must amend our social security law now, to provide:

1. Benefits for 26 weeks if we are to lose work. (Such insurance could be paid for one long spell of sickness or for several short spells. (Work injuries should not be counted because our state workmen's compensation laws are intended to take care of them.)

2. Disability benefits if we are disabled for work for more than 26 weeks. (Work injuries should not be included.) These disability benefits should continue as long as a worker is disabled, until he is 65 (60 for a woman), and eligible for old age benefits.

3. Rehabilitation for disabled workers, to fit them for work again, if possible.

4. Omission of periods of disability in figuring old age benefits, so as not to disqualify a worker or reduce his old age benefits. (Figure out for yourself what it would mean to you if you were disabled for 5 years.)

5. Benefits to a working mother for six weeks before and six weeks after her baby is born, to allow her to stay at home and to compensate her for loss of earnings while she is at home.

6. Hospitalization insurance benefits entitling a worker to 30 days of basic hospital costs a year for himself and for each member of his family whom he supports. (This would give your wife two weeks in the hospital when the baby is born and as much more hospital care as some year she needs it. It wouldn't come so hard if one of the children had to have his appendix out that same year.)

7. Unemployment insurance benefits for 26 weeks in a year, if you need them that long, under a national system, with all unemployment insurance funds pooled for greater protection. Benefits should be increased by allowing additional amounts for dependents.

8. Larger old age and survivors' benefits.

9. Old age and survivors' insurance for women beginning at the age of 60 instead of 65. (If your wife is 4 or 5 years younger than you are, think how much more comfortably you could retire at 65 if the benefits for both of you began then.)

10. Insurance for the entire family and not simply for the wage earner, in all the insurance features of social security.

Security Is Worth What It Costs

It is estimated that the much greater security which these improvements would provide would cost about five per cent of our wages now, and six per cent a few years from now, plus the same per cent of the pay roll from our employers (two and later on three per cent for old age and survivors' insurance and three per cent for unemployment insurance). We could get all this essential insurance for these joint contributions because social insurance has no expenses for selling costs, because our employers could match our payments, and because so many millions of workers could get at wholesale much better rates than any group insurance can give us.

Extending social security would not interfere with our union insurance or make our private insurance policies less valuable. Above our rock-bottom needs which these amendments to the social security law would take care of, each one of us can buy whatever greater protection we want and can afford to get.

We can't get this greater social insurance protection, and get it as we want it, unless we show that we are ready to pay our share of the added costs. The money for more insurance will come out of our wages, of course, costs. The money for more insurance will come out of our wages, of course, whether it is charged to us on the books or not. If we pay our share directly we can cut out the extra "hidden cost" that always creep in whenever we pay for a thing indirectly. Also when the money goes directly out of our pay, people realize that it is our insurance and we can have a stronger voice in advising on the way the insurance system works. Finally, now some employers think that their contributions to social security make them owners of the social security funds; and that is why some of them put up a fight under "experience rating" against the payment of every nickel of unemployment benefits to their former employes. The more social security protection we try to build up, the harder it will be for us to get it and to see that it works properly unless right on the books it shows that we are paying our share.

Security and Taxes

Of course, it won't be easy to pay for more social security. We are paying heavier taxes, right now, than ever before, and we are buying war bonds; but many of us have more work than we've had for a long time and are earning more pay. Besides, this war is going to call for still more sacrifices—more taxes, more bonds—this year. We must make sure that the next deductions from our pay envelopes are pledged to provide social security after the war, which can help to pay for the war cost. Otherwise we will tax ourselves so heavily that there will be no room for social security contributions on top of them. This is not selfishness on labor's part, either; it is the social insurance that will give security to workers and stability to the country after the war can help right now to pay for the war.

Insuring While We Pay for the War

This is how it works. For a while more money will be paid in for new insurance than will be paid out in benefits. Right now there is little unemployment and older workers are not retiring or are going back to work. It will be to our advantage, and that of the government, if we begin paying now while we have steady jobs and earnings, to be ready to pay out the benefits later when we need them. The taxes we pay now in excess of benefits paid out will be set aside in the social insurance funds. The money will be invested in United States Treasury obligations and the Treasury will have the funds to use right now for winning the war. Wars cost billions and this can help to get the money in the banks. We've got to finance this war on a pay-as-you-go basis just as far as we can. That means that each one of us must turn over every cent we can to pay for the war.

The more money the U. S. Treasury can get from us to pay for the war, the less money it will have to borrow from the banks. Of course, the Treasury wouldn't borrow cash from the banks; but it would get the credit. With the credit the Treasury could write checks and pay its bills; financing a government on nothing but paper credit leads straight to inflation. Nobody wants to go the inflation way that Germany went after the last war.

More Security Will Help to Prevent Inflation

Germany, you remember, began solving her problem of war costs by turning on the printing presses. At first everybody was good: they had more money in their pockets; and some of them could buy things they never could afford before—that is, for a while. Soon, however, the printing presses worked faster than the price mark-ups, but not for long. So they printed more money. Soon after the inflation started a five-cent street car fare went up to 20 pfennigs (the regular German currency) but before the inflation spree was over one street car fare cost 90 billion marks. Of course everybody's savings were wiped out.

We're fighting that sort of thing here; but getting credit from the banks and writing checks on it looks very much like a 1943 inflation model to be comfortable. The minute any country tries to finance itself primarily on paper, there's serious trouble ahead.

More Security Will Help to Keep Prices From Running Away

Then, too, the money we pay over to the government (in taxes, in social security contributions invested in federal bonds and for war bonds), we don't spend for buying things. Of course, most of us are working longer hours, and we're working hard and getting more money, so we like to buy the things we've had to do without and have wanted pretty badly for a long time. But there aren't so many things to buy in wartime, because factories have turned to war production and materials are going mostly to war necessities. When many people buy things that are scarce the prices go up. That is what is happening now. But we could prevent the rise in prices we are earning from burning a hole in our pockets until we spent them, we could keep the prices of what we do have to buy from running away. If we begin to pay wages we will never keep up with them. Everybody'd be poorer, and we'll wish we'd given the money to the government in the first place.

Paying For Insurance Is Better Than Frozen Wages

Fearing this answer many people call credit inflation and buying inflation, many people are suggesting that the government freeze our wages. We don't want that to happen, for plenty of good reasons which we all know. We're willing to work hard and cheap, to buy more war bonds, and build up more social insurance for ourselves and our families.

The social security contributions will buy us insurance later on. This is in line with the wartime plans to make returning to the people, when peace comes, for the work they did and cheap for the help they gave in helping to win the war. The money that goes into social security can be used now in helping to win the war, and again after the war, in insuring us against unforeseen emergencies.

Some people seem to think it isn't quite straight to use social security money twice, this way: but the government will redeem the social security war bonds just as it will redeem the war bonds held by banks or by anyone else. The money will be spent by people who've been working and saving and will go right back to the people in purchasing power. Otherwise the government will have to raise taxes to pay unemployment relief after the war in addition to the money it will need to redeem the war bonds.

If we as well as our employers contribute toward social insurance we'll be helping to win the war, and we'll be putting a brake on rising prices. We'll be answering the people who want to freeze our wages. We'll be helping to keep the American dollar worth a dollar after the war—instead of just a piece of engraved paper like some of the Wall Street securities after 1929. We'll be protecting ourselves and our families against the worst emergencies and giving ourselves freedom from fear of insecurity.

A. F. OF L. COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY.
MATTHEW WOLL, *Chairman*,
GEORGE MEANY,
G. M. BUGNIAZET,
JOHN F. FREY.